17. The IJSC feels that Japanese people are evincing more interest in economic relations with India in future. The Committee learnt that at many as 140 Japanese companies and organisations are participating in the India International Engineering Trade Fair to be held in New Delhi from February 8, 1997, where Japan will be "partner country". Many high level Japanese business as well as Japanese Parliamentary delegation are expected to visit India around that time. Even before that the Foreign Minister of Japan, Mr. Ikeda, is visiting India in the middle of January, 1997.

18. Japan has got large surplus foreign reserves which they can use for helping India. As a matter of fact when India faced foreign exchange crisis in 1991, it was Japan which helped India. Therefore, now the Government of India should promote more economic relations between India and Japan. Our Embassy in Japan was facing some difficulties in getting visas for researchers and journalists which have to be cleared by the Ministry of External Affairs and Ministry of Home Affairs. This process should be accelerated. It would be better to create separate cell in the Ministry of External Affairs and the Ministry of Home Affairs and make them "fast tracks" for processing the requests of Japanese investors, researchers, journalists and tourists.

19. The earlier Chairman of the IJSC Mr. Vasant Sathe had promised to arrange for a visit of about 10 media persons from Japan to India. This promise has not been kept up. The present Chairman, Dr. G. Thimmaiah has written to the Minister of Civil Aviation and Tourism to bear the cost of the visit of the media persons. This should be expedited and Indian Embassy in Japan should be asked to select the right media persons for visiting India and reporting latest developments which are taking place in India. This will further beest the image of India and encourage Japanese investors to invest in Indian.

20. It was decided that the next meeting of the IJSC should be held in India some time in the month of September, 1997.

G. Thimmaiah
Chairman
India Japan Study Committee.

Steering Committee on Integrated Development of Himalayan Region

3124. SHRI S.M. KRISHNA: Will the Minister of PLANNING AND PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether a Steering Committee on Integrated Development of Himalayan Region has been set up;

(b) if so, the terms of reference thereof;

(c) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the news-item captioned "States dictum irks Plan body" which appeared in the 'Hindustan Times' dated the 5th April, 1997;

(d) if so, the reaction of Government thereto; and

(e) by when the said Committee would be finalising its report?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING AND PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION AND MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY (SHRI YOGINDER K. ALAGH): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The terms of reference of the Steering Committee are given below:

(i) to review and monitor the progress of implementation of the plans and programmes in consultation with concerned State with specific reference to development of the Himalayan Region.

(ii) to identify academic, NGOs and other institutions which are involved with development of the Himalayan Region and mobilise their efforts in a synergetic manner for the development of the Himalayan Region and for protection of the ecology of the region.

(iii) to suggest funding mechanism to met the requirement of the developmnet programmes.

(iv) to prepare periodic reports as necessary on the progress of the implementation of the measures recommended by the Steering Commitee.

(c) Yes, Sir.

(d) The contents of the news item which appeared in The Hindustan Times of dated 5th April, 1997, have been noted.

(e) As per terms of reference, the Steering Committee is to prepare periodic reports as necessary on the progress of the implementation of the measures recommended by the Steering Committee.

Poverty Alleviation Schemes in the country

3125. SHRI JANARDAN YADAV: Will the Minister of PLANNING AND PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION be pleased to state:

(a) the details of poverty alleviation schemes being implemented in the whole of the country particularly in Bihar;

(b) the targets and achievements during the last year; and

(c) the effective measures Government propose to take for eradication of poverty in the country?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING AND PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION AND MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY (SHRI YOGINDER K. ALAGH): (a) The major poverty alleviation schemes being implemented in the country including the State of Bihar are (i) The Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP), (ii) The Jawahar Rozgar Yojana (JRY); (iii) The Employment Assurance Schemes (EAS); (iv) The Nehru Rozgar Yojana; (v) The Urban Basic Services for the Poor (UBSP); and (vi) The Prime Minister's Integrated Urban Poverty Eradication Programme (PM's IUPEP). While the first three Programmes are being implemented in the rural areas of the country the remaining three are urban poverty alleviation programmes. The details of the Programmes are given below:

(i) Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP): IRDP is a Centrally Sponsored scheme, being implemented in all the blocks of the country since 1980. Under this scheme Central funds are allocated to States on the basis of proportion of rural poor in a State to the total rural poor in the country.

IRDP aims at providing self-employment opportunities to the rural poor through assistance in the form of subsidy and bank credit to enable them to acquire productive assets and appropriate skills to cross the poverty line on a sustained basis. The target group consists largely of small and marginal farmers, agricultural labourers and rural artisans whose household annual income is below the poverty line of Rs. 11000 at 1991-92 prices. Within the target group there is an ensured coverage of certain categories-SC/ST 50%; women 40%; and physically handicapped 3%. The ceilling for subsidy is Rs. 6,000 for SC/ST families and the physically handicapped; for others Rs. 5,000 in Drought Prone Area Programme (DPAP) and Desert Development Programme (DDP) areas and Rs. 4,000 in the non-Drought Prone Area Programme (DPAP) areas. Recently, a new category of trained literate youth has been introduced for which admissible subsidy is 50 per cent of the project cost of Rs. 7,500 whichever is less. Further, for a group of five beneficiaries subsidy has been increased to 50 per cent of the project cost or Rs. 1.25 lakh whichever is less.

Training of Rural Youth for Self-Employment (TRYSEM) and Development of Women & Children in Rural Areas (DWCRA) are two important sub-schemes of Integrated Rural Development Programme.

(ii) Jawahar Rozgar Yojana (JRY): The JRY is a wage employment programme which has been in operation since 1989. The primary objective of the JRY is the generation of additional gainful employment for the unemployed and underemployed persons in the rural areas. The secondary objective is the creation of sustained employment by strengthening rural infrastructure and assets in favour of the rural poor for their direct and continuing benefits, and for improvement thereby in the overall quality of life for the people in the rural areas. Under the Yojana, funds are allocated among the States/UTs on the basis of proportion of rural poor in a State/UT to the total rural poor in the country. Further, the allocations to the districts within each State/UT are made on the basis of an index of backwardness which takes into account the proportion of rural SC/ST population in the district and inverse of agricultural production per agricultural worker, with equal weights.